

**An Analysis of Students' Reading Comprehension Based on The Four Levels  
Comprehension Skills  
( A Study at The Second Year Students of SMAN 10 Bengkulu  
Academic Year 2014/2015)**

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**Abstract**

The main focus of the study was to describe how students' reading ability in comprehending English text based on the four levels comprehension skill and what levels do most students' get comprehending the texts at the second year students of senior high school. The population of this research was all of students of the second year of SMAN 10 Bengkulu in academic year 2014/2015. Random sampling was used to take the sample which consisted of 30 students of the second year students. It was used descriptive quantitative method. In collecting the data, the researcher used reading test based on the four level comprehension skills. The result of this study showed that, only small number of students were successful in answering the questions in interpretive and critical level. It is because students were difficult to find the main ideas and drawing conclusion that also expressed indirectly. However, mostly of students could answer the questions in literal and creative level. It is because the ease of the text and the information also directly stated. The finding is also supported by statistical analysis showed that, the mean score of literal level was (93.33). It means that literal level was on very good category. The mean score of interpretive level was (53.33). It means that interpretive level was on low category. The mean score of critical level was (36.67). It means that critical level was on failure category. While, the mean score of creative level was (72.00). It means that creative level was on moderate category. It is conclude that students more

comprehensive when they face English text based on the literal and creative levels than interpretive and critical levels.

*Keywords: Reading ability, four level comprehension, literal level, interpretive level, critical level, creative level.*

## **A. Background of The Research**

According to Krashen & Terrel (as cited in Nurul, 2014) states that reading makes a contribution to overall competence, to all four skills.<sup>1</sup> It can be analyzed that reading can influence another skill. Without reading, we are lack of the background knowledge to support our idea.

Reading is process to get information and to understand the meaning of the some words from the text. Most people will agree that reading without meaning and comprehension is not reading.

In Indonesia, the government has considered English language as the most important foreign language and the compulsory foreign language subject must be learnt by students from elementary school until university level.

Ideally, the second year students of Senior High School are conveyed to learn and to master some genres of language skills. It has been stated on Standard of Competency and Basic Competence (SK,KD) in the current curriculum KTSP 2006. This curriculum also states that the teaching of reading should emphasize the skill on comprehending various kinds of texts and increase the students' mastery on reading comprehension. Many experts believe that the problem in teaching reading in foreign language is that knowing the word only do not help the students to understand what they read.

However, most of second year students of SMAN 10 Bengkulu are still difficult to achieve those targets because their knowledge of English is still low primarily on reading skill. Based on the unstructured interview result with the

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<sup>1</sup> Nurul, Siti. 2014. *The Correlation Between Students' Reading Comprehension and Their Writing Ability*. Unpublished Thesis.

teacher on 3rd February 2015 concerning students' reading test, there are some difficulties probably faced by students in reading activities such as: finding the details, finding the main ideas and make inferences from the text and as a result the students got difficulty in retelling or in transferring the information from the text.

The students' difficulties above are related to the four levels of comprehension skills. Based on research finding, the researcher conducted a case study at the SMAN 10 Bengkulu as the source of the data since the most students found difficulties in comprehending English text. The researcher is interested in studying the students' reading comprehension based on the four levels of comprehension skills. The levels are Literal level, Interpretive level, Critical level, and Creative level <sup>2</sup>.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher interests to raise the research entitled : An Analysis of Students' Reading Comprehension Based on The Four Levels Comprehension Skills : A Study at The Second Year Students of SMAN 10 Bengkulu In Academic Year 2014 – 2015.

## **B. Research Question**

Based on the explanation above, so the research questions in this research are:

1. How is students' reading ability in comprehending English text based on the four levels comprehension skill?
2. What levels do the most of students' get in comprehending English text?

## **C. Research Objectives**

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<sup>2</sup> Heilman, A, et.al. 1988. *The Principles and The Practices of Teaching Reading*. Ohio. Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co. p.246

The objectives of this research are to find out how students' reading ability in comprehending English text based on the four levels comprehension skill and what levels do most students' get comprehending the texts.

## **D. LITERATUR REVIEW**

### **1. Definition of Reading**

Nunan (1991: 43) says that reading is usually conceived as a solidarity activity in which the reader interacts with the text in isolation.<sup>3</sup> Then, Nuttal (1996) also defines reading is an activity to understand the message that us sent by the writer In order to achieve that purpose, it also explained that in teaching reading, the teacher should be emphasized on the skill to help the students' motivation, various kinds of English text to help the students, develop their ability in reading.<sup>4</sup>

### **2. The Purpose of Reading**

According to Anderson (1992:53) there are seven goals of reading, reading for the details and facts, read for main idea, reading for sequence of organization, reading for inference, classify reading, reading for evaluate and compare the reading for the contest.<sup>5</sup>

- a. Reading for details and facts: reading to find out what the subject of the story.
- b. Reading for main ideas: reading to get the problem statement.
- c. Reading to the order of organization: reading to know every part of the story.
- d. Reading to a conclusion: read to know what is meant by the author of the story.
- e. Reading to classify: reading to find things that are not ordinary.
- f. Reading to evaluate: reading to find out the value of the story.

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<sup>3</sup> Nunan, D. 1991. *Language Teaching Methodology: A Textbook for Teacher*. Sydney: Prentice Hall.p.43

<sup>4</sup> Nuttal, Cristine.1996. *Teaching Reading Skill in a Foreign Language*.London: Heinemann p.23

<sup>5</sup> Anderson,Dee.1992. *Reading* . Chicago: American Library Association p.53

- g. Reading to compare or contest: reading to compare how the story of the reader life way.

### **3. Reading Comprehension**

Comprehension means understanding. It is the ability to get the meaning of the something. Reading comprehension is the first goal in reading. Duke and Pearson (2001:423) stated that reading is comprehension. Comprehension is reading all about.<sup>6</sup> Explain without comprehension is simple word barking being able to articulate the word correctly without understanding its meaning.

### **4. The Levels of Comprehension Skills**

Smith (1969) in Reid (1981:457) divide comprehension into four levels of skills: literal, interpretative, critical and creative.<sup>7</sup> These four levels correlate with the classes of cognitive (intellectual) behaviors identified Bloom (1966:55) and others, since comprehension skills are also thinking skills. “Knowledge” relates to the literal level of comprehension; “comprehension” and “application” to the interpretive level; “analysis” and “evaluation” to the critical level; and “synthesis” to the creative level.<sup>8</sup>

According to Heilman et.al (1981:246) identifies the following comprehension skill levels:<sup>9</sup>

#### **a. Literal Level**

This level is the simplest level. It means that what the reader needs to do is to reproduce the fact as they are related by the writer. At this level, Questions are factual and detailed. The skills needed for this level are nothing factual data, sequence, chronology, and enumeration. Sample phrases or questions for this level are as follows :

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<sup>6</sup> Duke, N. K. & Pearson, P. D. (2001). *How Can I Help Children Improve Their Comprehension?* Ann Arbor, Michigan: (CIERA), Michigan State University.p.423

<sup>7</sup> Reid, Ethna.R. 1981. *Educational Leadership*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development p.457

<sup>8</sup> Bloom, Benjamin S., ed. 1966. *Taxonomy of Educational Objective*. New York: David McKay Company. P.55

<sup>9</sup> Heilman, A, et.al. 1988. *The Principles and The Practices of Teaching Reading*. Ohio. Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co. p.246

- What is .....
- How old .....
- When .....

The abilities which refer to the literal level are :

- Knowledge of word meanings.
- Recalling of ideas directly stated or paraphrased in own word
- Understanding of grammatical clue-subject, verb , pronoun, conjunction and so forth.
- Recalling of main idea explicitly stated.
- Knowledge of sequence of information presented in the text.

#### **b. Interpretive Level**

This level requires the reader to go beyond the information given by the writer. The reader is required to see the significance of the data; to note various relationships such as cause effect and relation of the part to the whole, to make comparison, to draw conclusion and inference and to make generalizations.

Sample phrases or questions for this level are as follows:

- Why .....
- What evidence .....
- What you can conclude .....

The abilities which refers to the interpretive level are:

- Reasoning with the information presented to understand the writer's tone, purpose and attitude
- Inferring factual information, main ideas, comparison, cause-effect relationships not explicitly stated in the text.

#### **c. Critical Level**

At this level, the students learn to evaluate and judge the information and the writer's use of language for guiding the reader's interpretation; noting

evidence of the writer's bias, his qualifications, his point of view, intent and truthfulness.

Sample phrases or questions for critical level are as follows:

- Judge .....
- What would be the result of .....
- How would you describe .....

The abilities which refers to the critical level are:

- Reacting to information in a text indicating its meaning to the reader.
- Analyzing and evaluating the quality of written information in terms of some standards.

#### **d. Creative Level**

This level requires the reader's involvement with the information presented as he uses it to formulate or rethink ideas of his own. Question at this level might consist of open-ended queries which require the reader to include his own knowledge, view, and value. Sample phrases or questions for this level are as follows :

- What would you do if .....
- Make up .....
- What does the text tell you about ....

The abilities that refer to the creative level are:

- Knowledge of emotional response of literary techniques
- Knowledge of response of forms, style and structures.

In short, Literal level involves acquiring information that is directly stated. Interpretive level involves "reading between lines" of making inference. Critical level involves evaluating of written material. Creative level involves formulating and rethinking ideas. From the description above, it can be stated that each level requires different abilities or skills. Interpretive level requires higher skill than Literal and so forth.

## **5. The Important of The Understanding Levels of Comprehension Skills**

The major goal of reading instruction is to foster in each student an ability to understand printed language. In global sense, individual characteristics of the students affect the quality and quantity of such understanding. Therefore, it is important for the teachers to know their students' strengths and weaknesses in reading in order to deliver good instructor. As Norton (1989:350) says that diagnosis is an essential aspect of reading comprehension, the most effective instruction considers both of students' strengths and weaknesses in reading.<sup>10</sup>

However, teachers are required to be aware of the power they posses in influencing students' comprehension levels. They should not bombard the students with specific question level. They should help their students to achieve higher levels of comprehension skills.

## **E. METHOD**

This research used descriptive quantitative method. It was to find out how students' reading ability in comprehending English text based on the four levels comprehension skill and what levels do most students' get comprehending the texts.

## **F. FINDINGS**

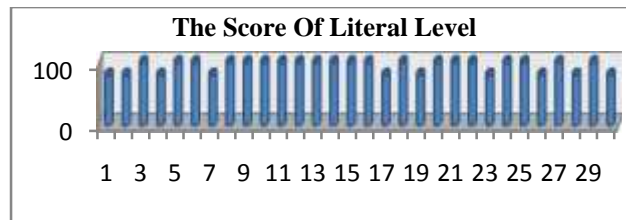
### **1. The Ability of Second Year Students SMAN 10 Kota Bengkulu in Comprehending English Text Based on The Literal Levels Comprehension Skill.**

Based on the data that was taken by using reading comprehension test, the student's ability in comprehending English text based on the literal levels comprehension skill can be described in the chart below:

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<sup>10</sup> Norton, Dona E. 1980. *The Effective Teaching Reading and Study Skills*. London Boston Co. p.350





**Chart 1: The Students' Score in Comprehending English Text Based on The Literal Levels Comprehension Skill.**

The chart above shows that the students' ability in comprehending literal text. The data shows that the lowest score was (80) and the highest score was (100). For students' score distribution, see the following table:

**Table 4. The Score Distribution of Second Year Students SMAN 10 Kota Bengkulu Ability in Comprehending English Text Based on The Literal Levels Comprehension Skill.**

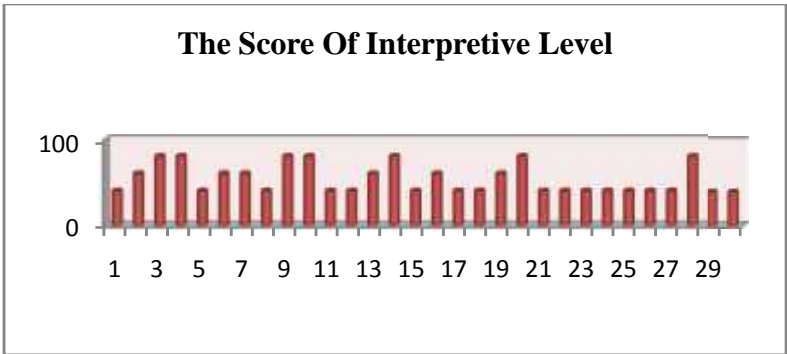
No.	Score Interval	Qualification	Frequency (Students)	Percentage (%)
1	90 - 100	Very good	21	70
2	80 - 89	Good	9	30
3	60 - 79	Moderate	-	-
4	40 - 59	Low	-	-
5	0 - 39	Failure	-	-
	<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above shows that there were 21 students (70%) were included 'Very Good' category and 9 students (30%) were included 'Good'

category. There were no students that included ‘Moderate’, ‘Low’ and ‘Failure’ category.

**2. The Ability of Second Year Students SMAN 10 Kota Bengkulu in Comprehending English Text Based on The Interpretive Levels Comprehension Skill.**

Based on the data that was taken by using reading comprehension test, the student’s ability in Comprehending English text based on the interpretive levels comprehension skill can be described in the chart below:



**Chart 2: The Students' Score in Comprehending English Text Based on The Interpretive Levels Comprehension Skill.**

The chart above shows that the students’ ability in comprehending English text based on the interpretive levels comprehension skill. The data shows that the students’ lowest score was (40) and the highest score was (80). For students’ score distribution, see the following table:

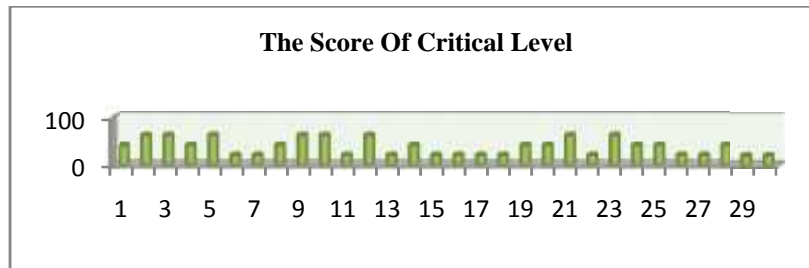
**Table 5. The Score Distribution of Second Year Students SMAN 10 Kota Bengkulu Ability in Comprehending English Text Based on The Interpretive Levels Comprehension Skill.**

No.	Score Interval	Qualification	Frequency (Students)	Percentage (%)
1	90 - 100	Very good	-	-
2	80 - 89	Good	7	23
3	60 - 79	Moderate	6	20
4	40 - 59	Low	17	57
5	0 – 39	Failure	-	-
	<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above shows that there were 7 students (23%) who included ‘Good’ category, 6 students (20%) who included ‘Moderate’ category and 17 students (57%) who included ‘Low’ category. There were no students who included ‘Very Good’ and ‘Failure’.

### 3. The Ability of Second Year Students SMAN 10 Kota Bengkulu in Comprehending English Text Based on The Critical Levels Comprehension Skill.

Based on the data that was taken by using reading comprehension test, the student’s ability in Comprehending English text based on the critical levels comprehension skill can be described in the chart below:



**Chart 3: The Students' Score in Comprehending English Text Based on The Critical Levels Comprehension Skill.**

The chart above shows that the students' ability in comprehending English text based on the critical levels comprehension skill. The data shows that the lowest score was (20) and the highest score was (60). For students' score distribution, see the following table:

**Table 6. The Score Distribution of Second Year Students SMAN 10 Kota Bengkulu Ability in Comprehending English Text Based On The Critical Levels Comprehension Skill.**

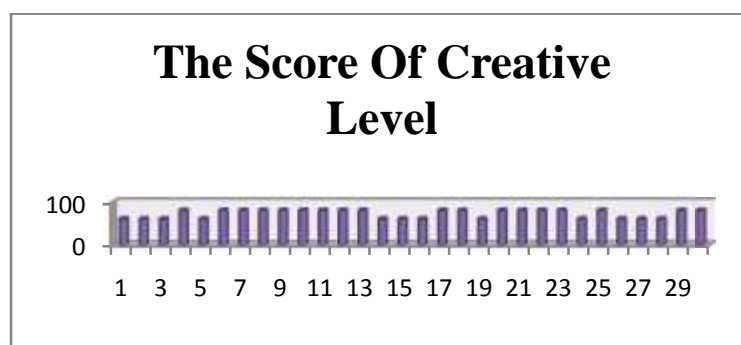
<b>No.</b>	<b>Score Interval</b>	<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Frequency (Students)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>1</b>	90 - 100	Very good	-	-
<b>2</b>	80 - 89	Good	-	-
<b>3</b>	60 - 79	Moderate	<b>8</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>4</b>	40 - 59	Low	<b>9</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>5</b>	0 - 39	Failure	<b>13</b>	<b>43</b>
	<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above shows that there were 8 students (27%) included 'Moderate', 9 students (30%) included 'Low' category and 13 students (43%) were included 'Failure' category. There were no students that included 'Very

Good’ and ‘Good’ category. In other words, mostly of them got failure category of score.

#### 4. The Ability of XI IPA 1 SMAN 10 Kota Bengkulu in Comprehending English Text Based on The Creative Levels Comprehension Skill.

Based on the data that was taken by using reading comprehension test, the student’s ability in Comprehending English text based on the creative levels comprehension skill can be described in the chart below:



**Chart 4: The Students’ Score in Comprehending English Text Based on The Critical Levels Comprehension Skill.**

The chart above shows that the students’ ability in comprehending pragmatically oriented texts. The data shows that the lowest score was (60) and the highest score was (80). For students’ score distribution, see the following table:

**Table 7. The Score Distribution of Second Year Students SMAN 10 Kota Bengkulu Ability in Comprehending English Text Based on The Creative Levels Comprehension Skill.**

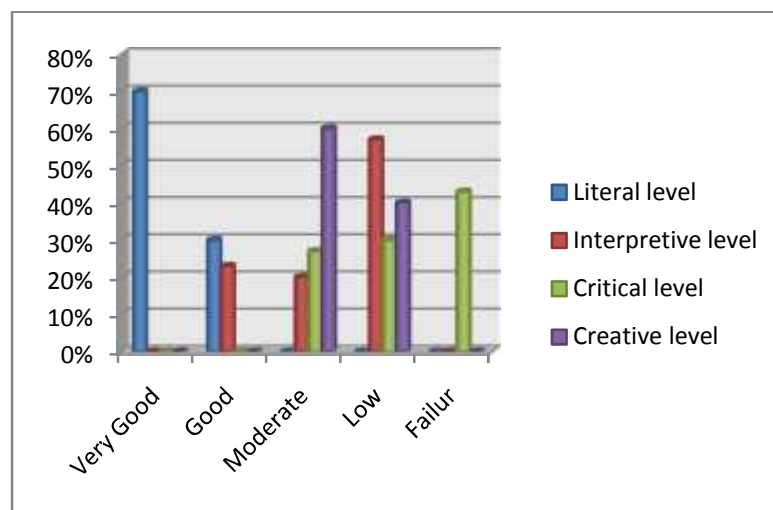
No.	Score Interval	Qualification	Frequency (Students)	Percentage (%)
1	90 - 100	Very good	-	-

<b>2</b>	80 - 89	Good	<b>18</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>3</b>	60 - 79	Moderate	<b>12</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>4</b>	40 - 59	Low	-	-
<b>5</b>	0 - 39	Failure	-	-
	<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above shows that there were 18 students (60%) included 'Good' category and 12 students (40%) were included 'Moderate' category. There were no students that included 'Very Good', 'Low' and 'Failure' category. In other words, mostly of them got good category of score.

##### 5. The Students' Score in Comprehending English Text Based on The Four Levels Comprehension Skill.

It clear that, students are more comprehensive with English text based on the literal and creative levels than English text based on the interpretive and critical levels. It can be seen from chart below:



**Chart 5: The students' score in Comprehending English text based on the four levels comprehension skill.**

From the chart above, students more comprehensive when they face English text based on the literal and creative levels than interpretive and critical levels. It can see from the chart above that score in literal and creative levels better than interpretive and critical levels. For more detail description see appendix about the students' score distribution in comprehending English text based on the four level comprehension skills.

**Table 8. The score distribution of second year students of SMA 10 Bengkulu in comprehending English text based on the four level comprehension skills.**

No	Score Interval	Category	Frequency				Percentage (100%)			
			Lt	It	Cri	Crea	Lt	It	Cri	Crea
1	90-100	Very Good	21	-	-	-	70%	-	-	-
2	80-89	Good	9	7	-	18	30%	23%	-	60%
3	60-79	Moderate	-	6	8	12	-	20%	27%	40%
4	40-59	Low	-	17	9	-	-	57%	30%	-
5	<39	Failure	-	-	13	-	-	-	43%	-
<b>Total</b>			<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the table that showed above in literal and creative levels, most of students are 'Good' category level of score and none of those who got low scores. While in interpretive and critical levels, many students that got score "Low" category. it is proved that some of students got "Poor" category. In

other words, students have good ability in comprehending English text based on literal and creative levels than interpretive and critical levels. To give clearer description about it, see the following table:

**Table 9. Descriptive Statistics of Reading Comprehension Based On Four Levels Comprehension Skills**

**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Literal	30	80	100	93.33	9.589
Interpretive	30	40	80	53.33	16.884
Critical	30	20	60	36.67	16.678
Creative	30	60	80	72.00	9.965
Valid N (listwise)	30				

Based on the statistic above, it means students' reading ability in comprehending English text based on interpretive and critical level was low category. It showed that some of the students got low category of score. Then, in comprehending English text based on literal and creative level was good category and no one students on low category.

### **G. Discussions**

Reading is one of the important skills to increase knowledge especially to be mastery of English. Reading will raise the ability to think creatively, critically, and imaginatively. Through reading, it will establish the ability to think through



the process: capturing ideas or information, understand, imagine, implement and express. That is why reading is very important in learning English. In this research, comprehending English text based on the four levels comprehension skill that took by the second year students of SMAN 10 Kota Bengkulu as the sample in this research takes as the main focus as the discussion.

Finally, It can be concluded that when students are faced with literal and creative level, that is when the meaning of individual words and sentences are easy to understand and without ambiguity remarkable or sentences that is expressed directly, they are less confused than when they are given a text that need the study of context or when text requires students to obtain the author's intent from other forms of writing. It would be an obstacle in the students understand of the text.

## **H. Conclusions**

After finishing the research, the researcher draw conclusion as follow :

1. First, based on the result of the research, the students' reading ability in comprehending English text based on the literal levels comprehension skill was Very Good category. It can be seen that mostly of the students were capable in answering the questions in literal levels. Therefore, most of them got Very Good score. The data showed that there were 21 students (70%) which were at the category of very good and 9 students (30%) at the category of good. No one student was at the category of moderate, low and failure category. The lower score of it was 80 and the higher score was 100. Almost half of them on very good category. It is better score than other levels.

Second, from the data above it showed that the students' reading ability in comprehending English text based on the literal levels comprehension skill was low. The data showed that there were 7 students (23%) who included good category, 6 students (20%) who included moderate category, 17 students ((33%) who included low category. No one student who included

very good and failure category. The minimum score of it was (40) and the maximum score was (80).

Third, the students' reading ability in comprehending English text based on the critical levels comprehension skill was failure category. It can be seen from the data showed there are 8 students (27%) which were at the category of moderate, 9 students (30%) at the category of low, and 13 students (43%) at the category of very failure. No one student was at the very good and good category. The lower score of it was 20 and the higher score was 60. Most of them got failure category of score.

Forth, the students' reading ability in comprehending English text based on the critical levels comprehension skill was good category, but some of the students were still on the moderate category level and no one students on very good category. It can be seen from the data showed there are 18 students (60%) which were at the category of good and 12 students (40%) at the category of moderate. No one student was at the category of very good, low and failure category. It is the second one better score than interpretive and critical levels . The lower score of it was 60 and the higher score was 80.

2. Most of the students are good at comprehending English text for literal and critical level, but they are low in comprehending English text for interpretive and critical level. In other words, most of the students could comprehend the English text well for literal and creative level but the low in comprehending English text for interpretive and critical level.

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